bles for some months, they are greedy of all greens, especially if the snow still lies upon the ground, and therefore the green but poisonous leaves of the Kalmia are to them very tempting. Horses, oxen and cows, which have eaten them, have likewise been very ill after the meal, and though none of them ever died of eating these leaves, yet most people believed, that if they took too great a portion of them, death would certainly be the result."

"On the other hand, the leaves of the Kalmia are the food of stags, when the snow covers the ground and hides all other provisions from them. Therefore, if they be shot in winter, their bowels are found filled with these leaves, and it is very extraordinary, that if those bowels are given to dogs, they become quite stupid, and, as it were, intoxicated, and often fall so sick, that they seem to be at the point of death; but the people who have eaten the venison have not felt the least indisposition."—*Travels in North America*, vol. i.

There is a common belief, that the flesh of the American Pheasant or Partridge is at certain times imbued with a poisonous quality. This circumstance has been attributed (I know not with what evidence) to their feeding in winter upon the buds of the Kalmia. Mr. Wilson, the ornithologist, informs us, that he has sometimes found the

crops of these birds distended almost entirely with laurel buds; but that he has eaten freely of the flesh of these very birds, without any ill consequence whatever.

On the human system, the Kalmia has been also said to manifest a deleterious influence. The late Professor Barton has adduced some evidences of its noxious character.* He states that the Indians make use of a decoction of the leaves to destroy themselves. In an Inaugural Dissertation on two species of Kalmia, the latifolia and angustifolia, by Dr. G. K. Thomas, we are told that the leaves of these shrubs possess a decidedly narcotic property. I have not recently seen Dr. Thomas' Dissertation, and therefore quote from memory and from extracts. From his experiments however it appeared, that a very small quantity was sufficient to produce sensible inconvenience. Thirty drops of a strong decoction, given six times a day, are said to have occasioned so much vertigo, as to render it necessary to diminish the frequency of its exhibition.

From my own experience, I am not disposed to think very highly of the narcotic power of the

* Dr. Barton states, that a few drops of the tincture poured upon the body of a large and vigorous rattlesnake, killed the reptile in a very short time.

JACOB BIGELOW *American Medical Botany* BOSTON, 1817-1820 CARY GRAPHIC ARTS COLLECTION, ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY Octavo